

## Maryland Department of Natural Resources Secretary's Message: January 2020

Posted by [TBN\(Staff\)](#) On 01/10/2020

As we begin a New Year, it is a good time to sit back and reflect on the successes we had in 2019. While there are too many to name in one article, a few rise to the top, including the designation of Mallows Bay as a National Marine Sanctuary (the first one in nearly a decade), the opening of Wolf Den Run (our newest state park), celebrating 20 years of the Rural Legacy program with more than 100,000 acres protected, and celebrating our 50th anniversary as a department.

We also honored the 90 veterans employed at DNR in keeping with Governor Hogan's proclamation that 2019 was the Year of the Veteran. For 2020, with the 100th anniversary of the 19th amendment approaching, Governor Hogan has proclaimed 2020 the [Year of the Woman in Maryland](#). I was honored to join the governor, my fellow female cabinet members, and other prominent women leaders to kick off this initiative in December.

In fact, DNR has long celebrated the history and contributions of women in the field of natural resources and Chesapeake Bay conservation.

You can visit Elk Neck and Point Lookout state parks to learn about some of the most important protectors of the Chesapeake Bay — lighthouse keepers — who were often women, beginning with Ann Davis. She took over the job at Point Lookout lighthouse from her father in 1830, becoming the first of three women who tended Point Lookout for all but six of its first 40 years of operation. Meanwhile, women keepers at Elk Neck's Turkey Point lighthouse were responsible for 86 of its 114 years in service. The last to serve there, Fanny May Salter, was also the last civilian woman lighthouse keeper in the nation.

I also encourage you to visit the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad State Park in Dorchester County, Maryland, where we worked with the National Park Service to preserve the history and the contributions of Harriet Tubman. Not only was Tubman one of the most important figures for abolitionist causes, she was a suffragette. The 17-acre state park visitor center allows visitors to experience Tubman's world through informative and emotive exhibits surrounded by a landscape that looks much the same today.

Today, the tradition of women as stewards of our resources continues to grow. DNR's first female secretary, Dr. Sarah Taylor Rodgers, served from 1999 to 2001. In 2008, our current Maryland Park Service Superintendent Nita Settina became the first woman to lead our state park system since its founding in 1906. In fact, four of the seven senior leaders of the Park Service are women, and 10 of 21 park managers. Additionally, our department is a major employer of women scientists and resource managers — biologists, botanists, fisheries scientists, foresters — and many others.

As we enter the Year of the Woman, I look forward to sharing more stories like these and celebrating the many contributions women have made in our state's history — all while playing my own role, as a woman dedicated to protecting and conserving our natural resources.

[Jeannie Haddaway-Riccio](#) is Secretary of the Maryland Department of Natural Resources.

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